

OBSERVATIONS  
UPON THE  
PAPERS

WHICH

*Mr. Rookwood and Mr. Lowick*

Deliver'd to the

SHERIFFS

At the time of their Execution, *April 29. 1696.*

TOGETHER WITH

REMARKS

Upon some part of

*Mr. Cranburn's Discourse*

With the SHERIFFS at the same time.

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# OBSERVATIONS

## UPON THE

# P A P E R S,

Which Mr. *ROOKWOOD* and Mr. *LOWICK* delivered to the Sheriffs at the time of their Execution, *April 29. 1696.* Together with Remarks upon some part of Mr. *CRANBURN'S* Discourse with the Sheriffs at the same time.

**T**HERE is usually more than ordinary regard had to Declarations made by persons neer their death; upon this presumption, that their Minds being less concerned for the Affairs and Interest of this World, which they are soon to leave, and more affected with the sense of Gods impartial Judgment to which they are going, they will then declare the truth of whatever they pretend to speak about, fully and ingenuously, without any reservation or disguise.

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But

But in these Papers, there are such evident marks of care not to speak clearly or distinctly, and such plain endeavours to serve the Interests of a Party, that we deserve to be deceiv'd, if we pay them any other regard than what upon a strict Examination shall appear to be due to them.

*Mr. Rookwood's Paper.*

It is evident that the Paper which he deliver'd to the Sheriffs was not of his own drawing: for (as I have been credibly inform'd) he was seen to transcribe it from a Draught which was not of his own Hand-writing; and such a Draught was afterward found by the Executioner in his Pocket, and deliver'd by him to Mr. Sheriff *Buckingham*, who has it now in his Possession.

Whether therefore the Contents thereof are to be regarded as the Natural Sense of one in expectation of Death, or rather as the artificial Contrivance of a Director, who was to serve his Cause and Party by whatever Credit the Words of a dying Man might obtain, must be left to the Consideration and Judgment of the Reader.

He begins with great assurance of the justice of his Cause, as appears by his committing it to the cognizance of God, without desiring any mercy or pardon for *that*, but affirming it to be a just Cause.

Now

Now considering what the Cause was for which he came to die, that it was for having engaged himself in that execrable design of the Assassination; that he should think to justify this at his appearing before the Judgment-seat of God; if this were his own thought, shews the desperate stupidity of his conscience. But if, as I rather believe, he only transcribed the words of his Director, it argues the madness of that profligate Wretch, that for any Cause whatsoever durst put such words upon a dying Man as could not but hazard his Salvation.

First he makes him declare that he chang'd his resolution of dying in silence, being moved by thoughts of his duty to others, and chiefly to the late King *James*. And it appears by what follows, that the service intended to be done *Him* by the Paper, is, to clear him from all suspicion of his having been privy to the Assassination. We are therefore chiefly to observe, whether what he offers for that purpose be sufficient.

*I do, saith he, with all Truth and Sincerity declare, and avow, that I never knew, saw, or heard of any Order or Commission from King James, for the Assassinating the Prince of Orange, and attacking his Guards.*

Here he seems to clear King *James* of having any thing to do in this Matter, and yet does not clear him of that with which he is principally charged. For it is not said in any of the Trials that there was a Commission in those very Words. All that the Witnesses have deposed, is, concerning a Commission to levy War  
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upon the Person of the Prince of Orange, and that is not deny'd in this Paper.

But here Mr. Rookwood is brought to declare that he never knew of any Order or Commission from King James for these Purposes. For the Commission we shall see afterwards. But did not he know of any Order? could he say this with all truth and Sincerity? Yes, he avows this according to his Paper. And yet the contrary can be prov'd beyond all contradiction. It can be prov'd that with the late King's Order or Leave he came from his Quarters at Esdan to St. Germain's in the middle of January last. The first Day he came thither, after he had been at the King's Dinner, he was becken'd by him into the Queens Bed-Chamber. There King James told him he must go for England, and there follow the Directions of Sir George Barkclay. Accordingly he came hither, and was in London at the Time when King James came to Calais. No doubt his coming hither was for the doing of something that might facilitate the then-intended Invasion. But what he was to do, King James had order'd him to know from Sir George Barclay; and the same Order he gave to several others at that time, as we are inform'd by some of their Depositions.

Mr. Harris declar'd that the late King at St. Germain's, gave to himself and Mr. Hare the sham Names by which they went at their return to England, and told them they were to go by those Names. He also told them the Times when, and the Place where they were to find Sir George Barclay, and by what Sign they should know him; and bid them take their Orders from him. Now  
all



all the Orders that Sir George gave them were relating to the Assassination. And, as Mr. Porter depos'd, when in Conversation Mr. Rookwood express'd his Dislike of it, Sir George told them *they ought to obey his Orders, for he had such a Commission for such a thing.* And, indeed, if one considers the Obscurity of Sir George's Character, that he hath no great Interest in his own Country, and is not much known in *England*; it can hardly be thought probable that he should be chosen to head a general Insurrection; but he was very fit to head a Party of Assassins. And that Mr. Rookwood himself thought that Sir George, in Vertue of his Commission from the Late King, had Authority to oblige him to assist in the Assassination, besides what has been prov'd of it already, will appear yet farther when we come to consider what he saith concerning himself.

The Paper goes on—*But I am certainly inform'd, that he, the Best of Kings, had often rejected Proposals of that Nature, when made unto him.*

It's very probable Proposals of this Nature have been often made and rejected, because they were made at times when the *French* Forces were not in readiness to give effectual Assistance for the Restauration of the late King. But we cannot but remember the Case of *Granval*, about the time of the *la Hogue* Business; and how when the *French* thought themselves in readiness, a Design of this Nature was not rejected, but encouraged, and was very near succeeding. And it may be observ'd that some of those who had propos'd it formerly when it was rejected, were engag'd in it now,  
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and in hope of great Advancement if it had succeeded; which shows that, in their Opinion, it was not dislik'd as Villanous or Dishonourable, though it was for the present rejected as Imprudent, because Matters were not ripe for it.

*Paper. Nor do I think he knew the least of the particular Design of attacking the Guards at his Landing.*

This is only the Speech-maker's Thought, or rather what he would have others think of the Matter. But can any one imagine this to be true? the Duke of *Berwick* having been so lately here to be inform'd, and to carry Intelligence of the Posture of their Affairs? Or could Mr. *Rookwood* be of this Opinion after he had received his *Directions* from Sir *George Barclay*, by Order from *K. James* his own Mouth.

But herein he followeth his Copy, which after the purging of King *James*, brings him next to speak for himself. And thus he says,

*That much against his Judgment he was engag'd as a Soldier by his immediate Commander whom he was to obey. That he hath serv'd his true King and Master for these twelve Years, and now freely lays down his Life for his Cause. That he ever abhorred Treachery even to an Enemy. That if it be a Guilt to have complied with what he thought, and still thinks, to have been his Duty, he is Guilty, but owns no other Guilt.*

As



As to his abhorrence of Treachery, and being engag'd against his Judgment; there appeared Signs of it in the Evidence that was given against him at his Tryal. Mr. Porter declared he had heard him say, *He believed it a very desperate thing, and that he was not very willing to engage in it.* And Mr. Harris, *That he own'd it was a barbarous thing; and that if he had known of it before he came over, he should have begg'd the King's Pardon at St. Germain's, and not have come over hither.* And as was mentioned before, he declar'd his dislike of it, 'till Sir George Barclay told him, *He ought to obey his Orders, for he had such a Commission for such a thing.*

But all this shews, that at that time he did not question the late King's knowledge of the Design: because it is clear that he engaged in it purely in Obedience and Duty to him; and that he thought Sir George Barclay's Commission of sufficient validity, not only to authorize and justify the Assassination, but even to oblige him to the Service against his own Judgment concerning the indiscretion or barbarity of the Attempt; for now by reason of that Commission, he should act as a Souldier and not as an Assaffine.

In this concluding Paragraph he complains of the King, whom he calls the *Prince of Orange*, that, *as a Souldier*, he did not consider his Case before he sign'd the Warrant for his Execution.

His Case, as a Souldier, might have been consider'd if he had been found in a Souldier-like Action or Design. But he was Convicted and Condemned as guilty of a Design to Assassinate. Would the *French King* consider

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any Man as a *Souldier*, that should be convicted of designing the like Attempt against himself? Or should our King, that is a *Souldier* himself, spare Men of that Profession, when they leave it, and turn to be Assassins? Or should he think them the less Villains, because the Life they would attempt, is that which he so freely exposes for the Common Preservation?

But how could these Men think that they acted like *Souldiers* in this, unless it were because they had a Commission for what they went about? And what was it? A Commission to *levy War against His Majesty's Person*, which they could not but know was a civil word for Assassination.

It is true, indeed, that Mr. *Rookwood* had this more to say for himself; that *he was engaged as a Souldier by his immediate Commander* whom he ought to obey. But the Service in which he was employ'd, he confess't was *against his own Judgment*. So much his Speech-maker has done him the right to let him say. But does he act like a *Souldier* that goes to kill a Man against his own Judgment? And to do it in that base manner of Murdering one in his Coach. Thus they would have kill'd him under whom their Lives were safe, while they conspir'd to take away his: whosoever does this, should not complain that he is *not consider'd as a Souldier*.

The last words of this Paper are all Untruth and Revenge, and on both accounts very unbecoming the Condition of a dying Man. Instead of putting Prayers in his Mouth for himself, the Speech-maker makes him give the King a parting Blow. He charges him as *Guilty of much Blood*.

*Blood crying out against him from all parts; and gives him an intimation of a heavier Execution hanging over his Head, than what is now inflicted on the Assassines.*

If by the *much Blood* he meant that which the War occasions the shedding of, he should have considered better to whom the guilt of that Blood is to be imputed; whether to the Defender of the Liberties of *Europe*, or to the great Invader of them. If he had regard to the Executions that have followed upon the Discovery of this Conspiracy, he should have compar'd what is now done, with what was done some years ago in the *West*, by him whom he yet esteems to be the *best of Kings*; and then instead of these bloody Words of His Majesty, he would have acknowledged his Clemency in abating the rigor of the Law, even in the Execution of *Rookwood* himself and other of his Complices.

If by the heavier Execution hanging over the King's Head, he means Punishments from God, he is very bold in pretending to fore-tell what God will do; If he means some Execution to be inflicted by Men, we are to take it as an intimation of the Danger the King is still in from that sort of Men. For whenever Men of treasonable Principles pretend to Prophecy, they truly tell us, what they design, and what they hope will some time or other be accomplished by Men of their Party.

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## Mr. Lowick's Paper.

I Shall take no notice of the devotional part of this Paper, nor of the Narrative, where he tell us he hath had the Honour to serve in several Commissions, &c. For dying Men are permitted to pray as they please, and to speak as they please in their own Commendation. I shall only make some brief Remarks upon what relates to the Cause for which he suffered.

*He saith, that, As for being engaged in that for which he dyes, it was never so positive that he had a Horse, or saw any allotted for him.*

This might be true, and yet no Argument of his Innocence, or Abatement of his Guilt; For several Horses were provided by *Lewis, Parkins*, and *Major Holmes*, for the use of those who never saw them. And if *Mr. Lowick* had now kept a Horse, not having done so before, it might have given Suspicion.

As to his denial of his being to provide two Men for the Assassination, we must refer to the Evidence given against him at his Tryal.

*He was not at any of their Meetings when they settled any such thing.*

This

This was the Case of many others ; the preparatory Debates were very secret, and few admitted to them ; but he was afterwards acquainted with the Resolution, and complied with it, as he confessed at the Place of Execution.

*He denies his having seen any Order or Commission from King James.*

Nor was he charged with having seen it, for it was seen by very few.

*I am confident none that know King James will believe he would give any such Order.*

If he means *an Order* in exprefs words to Assassinate ; whatever other Thoughts we may have of the late King, we do not yet believe him to be so destitute of Understanding, as to have given *such* an Order. But that Mr. Lowick himself did once think there were Orders to justify the Attempt, is depos'd by Mr. Harris at Rookwood's Tryal. *Being*, saith he, *in company with Mr. Rookwood and Mr. Lowick, I declared against the thing, as so barbarous, that no Man of Honour almost would be guilty of it : but Major Lowick answered, That we were to obey Orders, for sure Sir George Barclay would not undertake a thing of that nature without Orders.*

They that do not know King James, and yet would be able to judge whether he be capable of a Design of this nature, may consult a Book written with the Allowance of King James, and in many things from Informations given by that King himself ; as appears by the Advertisement



ment at the beginning of it. It is the History of the Revolutions of *England*, by Father *D'Orleans* a Jesuit, *Tom. 3. Lib. 11. Anno 1685.* Where he tells us that at King *James's* coming to the Crown, the late Duke of *Monmouth* being then in *Holland*, that King endeavoured to have had him privately seized and carried away : --- *Entreprit de fair enlever secretment le Duc de Monmouth, &c.* This was before the Duke appear'd to be guilty of any Treason; and what was to have followed if they had seized him, we are left to guess. But the Prince of *Orange* (our present King) so disliked the Enterprize, that he sent the Duke notice of it, furnish'd him with Money, and sent him away to a safer Place. It is true this Instance comes not fully up to the present Case, but it is one Step in such an ill way, and no Man goes all the Lengths of it at once.

But, to the greatest part of the People of *England* King *James* was once well known, and I hope we do not easily forget what we then thought of him; since therefore the Paper appeals to what they will believe that know him, I shall also refer it to every Man to believe in this matter as he thinks there is cause.

In the next Paragraph, the *Major* tells us what he should have been forward to do, if King *James* had landed; but that is nothing to the purpose for which he was condemned.

He adds, *He was never concerned in any bloody Affair in his Life; and that if killing the most miserable Creature in the World (or greatest Enemy) would now save his Life, restore the King, and make him one of the greatest Men in England, he would first chuse to die, because against the Law of God.*  
And



And yet he was guilty of the Assassinating Design; as was fully proved against him at his Tryal, and confessed by himself at his Execution. Either therefore he must think the Assassination of the King, and the attacking of the Guards, not to be *Killing* and a *Bloody Affair*, because intended and authorised by a Commission for levying War: Or, when he wrote this Speech, there were those with him that made no scruple of doing *Satan's* part in putting a Lie into the Mouth of a Man preparing for Death.

*If any, who are now Sufferers on this Account, think I have been too forward, and a Promoter of this Design; I do now declare it was never my Inclination to do a rash thing.*

The Implication of this is, that he also was engaged against his Inclination, and in the same manner, I suppose, as we have seen *Rookwood* was. They both thought it a Rash or Desperate and Dishonourable Enterprize; but believing that *Sir George Barclay* had orders for it, they thought it both Lawful and their Duty to obey him.

By supposing that some who now suffer on this account may have reason to reflect upon his Conduct, he sufficiently intimates that some were drawn into the Business by his Means: and he plainly confesses it at his Execution, *In what I have done in drawing in any into the Design, I humbly beg their Pardon.* But how is this consistent with what goes before in this Paper, where he disowns that he ever saw the two Men, whom

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it was sworn he was to provide, or had any on that account?

This shews how little Regard is to be given to whatever is said in these Papers, either in defence of the late King, or for the justification of their own Cause; for the plain Design of them is, not to declare the direct and open Truth; but to amuse the Ignorant, and give Confidence to the Mistaken; in a word, to serve the Interest of a Party.

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Mr.

## *Mr. Cranburn's Discourse with the Sheriff at the Place of Execution.*

**T**O the Question whether, if he had opportunity, he would have discovered the Plot ? he answers,

*He would never have discovered any Man. If he would have been an Informer, he might have been at Liberty about the Town as well as others.*

This seems to insinuate as if Endeavours had been used by the Government to bring him over to be an Evidence. But, if this were his Meaning, it is impudently false ; and in the Nature of the thing very incredible, for what Information could he have given, if his own Account be true, *That he had notice of the Assassination on Saturday Feb. 22. between nine and ten ; or, as he varies his Account in another place, between ten and eleven ; and between eleven and twelve the time was over ?* Others, who had been longer engaged, and more trusted, and understood better the Depth and Compass of the Design than this Man pretends to do ; yet stopping short of the whole Truth, obtained not such Liberty. This therefore is a vain and idle Boast.

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As to what he saith concerning his being a Member of the Church of *England*, and intimating as if the Doctrine thereof justified his Crime; as the latter of these two things is certainly false, so there is some reason to doubt whether the first of them was true.

But if this Man was a Member of our Church, he was much fitter to have been of another. For he followed his Guides with *blind Obedience*, and suffered them to impose upon him what they pleas'd for the Doctrine of the Church. And if they will acquit themselves from that Character which our Saviour laid upon the *Pharisees*, of being *blind Leaders of the Blind*, it lies upon them to shew what Doctrine there is in our Church by which they can justify such a Crime. I speak of them who direct or embolden Men to dye in so desperate a manner, confessing the Fact, but denying the Guilt, of being engaged in an Assassination. Let them consider the Questions that were put to this Man by Mr. Sheriff, and tell us plainly where the Doctrine of the Church of *England* allows of the Assassination of our King, or indeed, of any Person. In which of the Articles or Homilies, or Councils received by this Church, is this allowance to be found? The second part of the Homily against wilful Rebellion teaches us, That *Christ hath given to us, his Christians and Servants, an eternal Example to teach us to obey Princes, tho strangers, wicked, and wrongful*. This is plainly the Doctrine of the Church of *England*. But where is the assassinating Doctrine to be found? Especially in the Case of our Rightful and Lawful Sovereign, who fill'd the Throne after the late King had attempted the shaking of the Foundations on which it stood, and then deserted it, and joyn'd himself to the Interests of the Common Enemy.

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If a few angry discontented Men will separate from all others, and call themselves the Church of *England*, and their Notions the Doctrine of it, who can help it?

But it is to be hoped, that all sober Christians, who desire to be rightly guided, will be advised by their proper and lawful Pastors; and not trust themselves to be directed, especially in their Preparations for another World, by that sort of Men, who have shewn us by some late Examples, either how little they understand their Sacred Office, or to what unjustifiable purposes they are capable of abusing it.

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